

# RECLAMATION

*Managing Water in the West*

1st Quarter 2018

Reclamation's  
Newsletter on  
Safety and

## *The Safety Factor*



### Director's Message: Reclamation Safety Action Plans

From Karen Knight, Acting Director, Security Safety and Law Enforcement, Denver Office

I Care About Safety! Have you seen the posters and stickers? How many of us are aware of Reclamation's ongoing activities with improving our safety record beyond the posters and stickers? I have to confess I had heard of Reclamation's Safety Action Plans, but prior to taking this new position a few weeks ago, I had not given it much thought. The Department of Interior undertook a review of Reclamation's safety program in 2014 which resulted in major findings in six key areas:

- Leadership and Management
- Employee Involvement
- Hazard Recognition and Prevention
- Evaluation and Analysis
- Training and Awareness
- Program Implementation and Operation

In response, 21 teams were formed to evaluate the findings, Safety Action Plans were completed by each team, and 115 specific recommendations were made to Reclamation leadership. Over the last two years much progress has been made on the Safety Action Plans. Thirty recommendations remain to be addressed. Of the 85 recommendations that have been addressed to date, 46 are completed, 30 are issues that will continue as part of our annual work activities or reported under internal controls, and nine were related to recognition and awards that cannot be carried forward under our current policies.

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So what's next? This year the Office of Policy and Administration will roll out training for supervisors, reinforcing the supervisor's responsibility for each employee's safety. Training for employees will continue with specific job hazard training developed locally. We will place greater emphasis on the development and review of job hazard analysis prior to undertaking work tasks, and ensure that existing job hazard analysis are reviewed prior to taking on an ongoing but infrequent task.

We will also be developing teams to address review and development of new policies to better define roles and responsibilities, requirements, and regulations while allowing enough flexibility for offices to implement the directives to fit the needs of their specific operation. As part of the solution to the 85 recommendations the Reclamation Safety Office will be rolling out this year a new safety facility self-evaluation system, which employees can contribute to; and a new deficiency tracking system where anyone can see the status of any deficiency found during any inspection or audit at their facility.

It sounds like a lot and it is. But every employee is responsible for safety and we can all work together to create and maintain a safer work environment. Whether it be in a power plant, on a construction site, or in our own offices, by working together we make the impossible a reality. If we each care about safety, not just for ourselves, but for the person next to us as well, we will create the respectful, responsible and safe work en-



## Home Safety Tip

### Safe Snow Removal

#### It's a workout

Warm up by stretching before going outside  
Take frequent rest breaks, especially if you are not used to high stress exercise  
Stay hydrated, avoid alcohol before and after  
Use proper body mechanics and ergonomics (e.g. keep spine straight, lift from the knees) to avoid strains and pulled muscles  
Go at a steady pace; it's not a race  
Push snow to the side instead of scooping, lifting and throwing snow

#### Get geared up

Wear layers  
Wear breathable clothing; moisture wicking clothing closest to skin, if you have it  
Wear a hat or use your coat hood to keep from losing body heat  
Wear waterproof boots with tread that provides traction  
Wear a scarf, mask, or balaclava to cover your mouth and/or nose, to avoid breathing in cold air  
Wear high visibility top layer, preferably with reflective striping

#### Stay alert

Keep your field of vision as clear and wide as possible, while still keeping ears and head covered  
Avoid shoveling at dusk, dawn, or in the dark if possible.  
Do not work in or very close to streets or traffic; be aware of possibility of out of control vehicles that could head your way  
Listen to your body; be aware of shortness of breath, dizziness, tightness in your chest, sudden weakness, etc.

One final tip – think about where you will pile up your snow. As it melts and then meltoff freezes, it could cause safety hazards for pedestrians or vehicles. A Snow Shoveling Tip Sheet from the National Safety Council can be found at [\(intranet link here\)](#).

# LESSONS LEARNED

## Cable Confusion

Which Cable?



### Scenario

An electrician was installing a new 480 Volt AC, 4 conductor 10 gauge cable onto a cable tray holding approximately 25-30 other energized cables. After pulling the cable to the correct length, he laid the cable down on top of the other cables and prepared to cut the cable to the necessary length. After turning his head for a second to pick up insulated wire cutters, he returned to the cables to select what he believed was the correct cable. He began to cut... As he cut into the insulation, the cable sparked. He immediately realized he had grabbed the wrong cable. There was no injury and only minor damage to the cable insulation.

### Lessons Learned

Focus on the job you are doing – one task at a time.

Extreme caution is required regardless of the voltage or amperage.

Mark the “correct” cable with electrical tape or other marking device before cutting, laying down, or leaving to perform another task.

Double-Check (verify) to be sure you are cutting the correct wire/cable (and that it is de-energized).

Treat all cables and wires as energized until you have proven otherwise.

Report all damaged cables, wires, and other potential hazards to your supervisor, manager, or safety office as soon as possible.

## Winter Driving Preparedness

Winter months in the western U. S. have a variety of weather conditions that can change quickly from frigid and sunny to fierce blowing snow to almost downright balmy. With offices and remote field locations across the West, Reclamation employees often must drive in a variety of road and weather conditions. Here are some tips to be better prepared to face the winter driving season.

- Pack and take a Winter Travel Kit that includes at least these items: salt or sand or cat litter for traction, a small or folding shovel, jumper cables, flashlight with extra batteries, a first aid kit, potable water, nonperishable food items (nuts, dried fruit, hard candies, peanut butter, granola bars, etc.), extra set of warm socks and hat and gloves or mittens, a warm blanket or sleeping bag, a bright color cloth or flag and a signaling device (such as a mirror or LED red light).
- Always clear off all the snow from your vehicle, and remember to make sure that backup cameras or sensors are also free from snow and ice so they function properly.
- Check fluids and tire inflation before leaving for a trip, and carry extra fluids if possible.
- Make sure to top off the fuel tank, especially if traveling in rural areas or going long distances.
- Give extra space for vehicles on shoulders and increase following distances for larger vehicles, such as tractor trailers, tow-trucks or snowplows.

If stranded, remain calm and try staying inside your vehicle as much as possible. Do not continuously keep the vehicle running. If safe to do so, make sure the radiator and tailpipe are not blocked or covered, and place a bright colored cloth or flag on your antenna or side view mirror. Cycle fresh air into the vehicle periodically. Do not overexert yourself, as this may raise the risk of hypothermia from sweating. Change positions in the vehicle and move your arms and legs regularly.

Most importantly is to let someone know, before you leave, where you are going and what time to expect your return.

For more information, visit the National Safety Council's website on Winter Driving at <http://www.nsc.org/learn/safety-knowledge/Pages/news-and-resources-winter-your-car-and-you.aspx>

## In The News...

Some Reclamation employees use snow-tracked vehicles as part of their work duties. For an informative video on planning and safety protocols of this vehicle, go to

<http://sh-m.ag/2AxWLYo>

### Industry Beat

#### Spotlight on UTILITIES

##### **NATE releases video for tower workers: Safe use of snow-tracked vehicles**

WATERTOWN, SD — A new video from the National Association of Tower Erectors highlights the proper operation of snow-tracked vehicles when accessing remote tower locations.

The video explores planning methods, safety protocol and operational basics for maneuvering snow-tracked vehicles in inclement weather and rugged terrain. Topics include certified operator training, hazard awareness, emergency kits and communication.

"As a climber, it's your job to be aware of the situation around you when faced with challenging conditions," host Ryan Van Duzer, a travel video journalist, says in the video. "Be prepared both personally and with your equipment. It comes down to this: Either do it right or don't do it."



The video is part of NATE's Climber Connection campaign, which advocates safe work practices for communication tower workers. The association asks climbers and other industry stakeholders to post the video on social media platforms using the hashtag #ClimberConnection.

Watch the full video at <http://sh-m.ag/2AxWLYo>.



## In The News...

Extension cords are invaluable tools, in this age of powered devices and technology. But often we forget they can be hazards if not used or maintained properly. Here's a quick news snippet on extension cord safety. Additional information can be found at: <http://sh-m.ag/2wEhesM>.

### Extension cord safety

If extension cords are used at your workplace or jobsite, workers should be aware of a number of safety "do's" and "don'ts" before plugging in a cord, according to the Texas Department of Insurance, Division of Workers' Compensation.

First, workers need to know that extension cords are for temporary use only, TDI/DWC states. Other "do's":

- Check cords for damage before use.
- Ensure cords have the mark of an independent testing laboratory, such as UL.

- Make sure the cord is completely plugged into an outlet.
- Unplug extension cords when not in use, and store the cords indoors.
- Keep cords away from water. Ground fault circuit interrupter protection should be used when extension cords are in wet or damp environments.



Here are some actions to avoid when using extension cords:

- Don't use a cord outdoors that is marked for indoor use.
- Don't plug one cord into another.
- Don't run extension cords through walls or holes in the ceiling, and don't run them across floors or doorways.
- Don't force a plug into an outlet.
- Don't overheat an extension cord.
- Don't cover a cord with a rug or carpet.
- Don't drive over an extension cord.

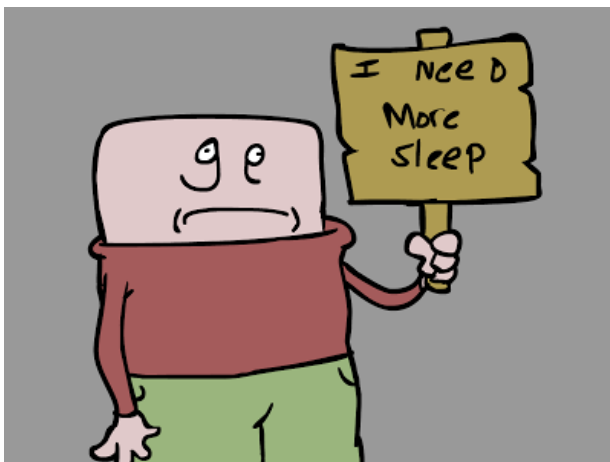
For more information on extension cord use, visit <http://sh-m.ag/2wEhesM>.

Bottom photo: Pichunter/Stockphoto;  
FACE photo: NIOSH

## In The News...

Sleep. We all say we wish we got more of it. We believe it adversely affects us. But really how bad can it interfere with our ability to function? A recent report shows it can be as impairing as being intoxicated.

On Page 6, read more about Sleep Deprivation.



### Lack of sleep can cause mental lapses similar to alcohol intoxication, researchers say

LOS ANGELES — Sleep deprivation may disturb brain cells and trigger temporary mental lapses that affect memory and visual perception, according to a recent study from researchers at the University of California, Los Angeles.

The researchers analyzed 12 patients with epilepsy who were preparing to undergo surgery. By implanting electrodes in patients' brains, researchers could find the source of their seizures. Participants remained awake all night prior to surgery because a lack of sleep can prompt epileptic episodes.

The patients were asked to categorize a variety of images as quickly as possible while electrodes measured their brain cell activity during their responses.

Researchers found that subjects' brain cells fired less quickly as the patients grew more tired, putting particular emphasis on the slowed function of the brain's temporal lobe, which controls memory and visual perception.

"We discovered that starving the body of sleep also robs neurons of the ability to function properly," Dr. Itzhak Fried, the study's senior author and a professor of neurosurgery at



the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA and Tel Aviv University, said in a Nov. 6 press release. "This leads to cognitive lapses in how we perceive and react to the world around us."

The researchers noted that sleep deprivation can affect the brain in ways similar to intoxication from alcohol. "We were fascinated to observe how sleep deprivation dampened brain cell activity," lead author Yuval Nir, of Tel Aviv University, said in the release. "Unlike the usual rapid reaction, the neurons responded slowly and fired more weakly, and their transmissions dragged on longer than usual."

The National Sleep Foundation suggests adults get seven to nine hours of sleep a night.

The study was published online Nov. 6 in the journal *Nature Medicine*.

# Safety Focus

## Sleep Deprivation—A Nightmare for Americans

A recent National Safety Council survey found seventy (70) percent of Americans are concerned about the impacts of sleep habits on their health; sixty-seven (67) percent worry about how it affects their mental faculties. (Facility Safety Management Magazine, December 2017). Considering that over half of us are saying that we are not getting enough sleep or not getting quality, restive sleep, the topic of sleep deprivation has become more common for safety professionals and workplace managers.

A sleep deprived employee is less attentive, has impaired focus, has slower reaction times, is prone to drowsiness and their mental acuity is reduced. Sleep deprivation also adversely impacts their overall health, as it can lead to depression, obesity, cardiovascular disease, as well as other medical issues.

The National Sleep Foundation recommends that adults ages 26-64 get a consistent seven to nine hours of sleep each night. Regularly getting six hours or less a night will lead to sleep deprivation, in most adults.

Worker safety comes from a multitude of factors, and adequate rest is one of those factors. So not just for your own health and well-being, but also for the safety of those around you, make good sleep part of your daily routine.

For more information about sleep deprivation, visit the National Sleep Foundation at [www.sleepfoundation.org](http://www.sleepfoundation.org). Information about sleep deprivation and fatigue impact on safety, go to the National Safety Council's site at [www.nsc.org/fatigue](http://www.nsc.org/fatigue).



# Sleep Deprivation Quiz

Rate the following statements, based on this answer scale.

Never = 0. Sometimes = 1. Often = 2. Always = 3.

Put your number in the box, then total up your score.

- 1. I sleep through my alarm clock and/or hit the snooze button.
- 2. I have morning grogginess.
- 3. I need caffeine to help me wake up in the morning.
- 4. I need caffeine to help me stay awake during the day.
- 5. I have difficulty concentrating or easily lose my focus, and it is not due to a medical condition.
- 6. I turn down social engagements because of fatigue.
- 7. It is difficult to keep my eyes open during a long drive or when driving at night.
- 8. I fall asleep within five (5) minutes of going to bed.
- 9. I am forgetful during the day.
- 10. I am easily irritated by family members and/or co-workers.
- 11. It takes me longer to get things done than usual for me.
- 12. I experience an afternoon slump.

TOTAL:

Scoring Key:

0-9 = Doing well; you are not sleep deprived.

10-24 = Caution; you are on your way to sleep deprivation.

25-36 = Danger zone; you are sleep deprived.

(from the Sleep and Health Journal; online at [www.sleepandhealth.com](http://www.sleepandhealth.com))

# SAFETY BLAST

Welcome to the Safety Blast, brought to you by your Lower Colorado Regional Safety Office. We hope you find this information useful, and we welcome feedback and ideas you would like to see featured.

## Home Fires Peak During Winter Months

Working smoke alarms cut the chances of dying in a house fire in half, and they are a family's first indication of a fire. But once that alarm sounds a fire can spread quickly, leaving only a minute or two to escape, according to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA). That's why it's so important to have an escape plan and practice it using different ways out of the house.

## Check Batteries and Clean your Smoke Detector

According to the NFPA, nearly half of home fires that fail to trigger alarms occur in houses where batteries have expired or been removed from a smoke alarm. All smoke detectors and alarms have a test button that, when pushed, causes the alarm to sound. Most detectors have either a blinking or a solid light that glows to let you know that the alarm is getting power. While you're checking your battery every month, also brush or vacuum the alarm to keep dirt and dust out of the mechanism. Never use cleaning sprays or solvents that can enter the unit and contaminate sensors. After a period of ten years, a smoke detector has endured more than 87,000 hours of continuous operation, during which time the internal sensors have probably become contaminated with dust, dirt, and air pollutant residues. If your alarm or detector is more than ten years old, consider replacing it to maintain optimal detection capabilities of deadly smoke in your home.

<http://www.dummies.com/home-garden/home-security/how-to-test-smoke-alarms-in-your-home/>

